

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING FOR THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS OFFICER (TCO)

8003

(No.40 November 2016)

Minimum orientation for the new TCO shall include spending at least one day with the appropriate Region TCO, and the same amount of time with the Senior TCO in Sacramento. It is also recommended that the new TCO visit the Public Safety Communications Office headquarters in Sacramento for a brief tour and meeting with engineering staff assigned to CAL FIRE project work. Close to home, the new TCO should meet and establish working relationships with the appropriate PSC radio technicians and their area supervisor. Ideally, all of these meetings should occur within the three months of the TCO's appointment.

TRAINING

8003.1

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The department shall make every effort to provide initial and ongoing in-service training for its TCOs. As a minimum, this training shall include:

- CAL FIRE programmed text on radio theory
- ICS Communications Unit Leader course
- Annual ECC Chiefs Workshops / Training
- Basic computer training (CAL FIRE Academy: ECC operations, other courses also available through STP-State Training Program, and local colleges)
- Training with TRAIS (Telecommunications Radio and Inventory System)

*see Section [8060](#), and Section [8062.7](#), for training application.

Budget and workload realities being as they are, it may be difficult for a new TCO to attend all of the trainings listed above within his or her first year. Nevertheless, all of these courses are relevant and valuable and should be pursued.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE TCO

8003.2

(No.40 November 2016)

The cost and complexity of CAL FIRE's communications system may at first be a little intimidating to the new TCO who is suddenly expected to manage a substantial piece of it. Keep in mind that you are not expected to be a technical expert. The knowledge required will come gradually through experience, training and self-study. Be aggressive in pursuit of the facts you need. There is a far-reaching network of resources available from which to draw information. Following are some of the best:

- Senior TCO and Telecommunications Analysts. They are there to help you, and are as close as a phone call, fax or email. Briefly, their duties are:

Senior TCO: Statewide system management / major project management, frequency coordination.

HQ TSA II #1: Project coordination (ECC rebuilds, etc); system planning and documentation; Statewide dispatch console management.

HQ TSA II #2: Inventory coordination (TRAIS); Equipment purchases; Project coordination; Radio Programming files; Equipment survey.

HQ TSA II #3: Telephone systems coordination / acquisition; Satellite systems management, E911 development and implementation.

- Cal OES, Public Safety Communications : your local technicians and area supervisor; HQ engineers assigned to CAL FIRE projects.
- TCOs in your region. If they've been in the job long, they will have many of the answers to your most basic questions or problems. Regular TCO meetings to exchange and share telecommunications information are extremely helpful.
- Your administrative unit's communications / radio vault files. A few hours spent perusing vault space agreements, completed and pending TD-207s, frequency-use agreements, including TD-400, etc. will quickly give you an overview of what has been taking place, and will also furnish examples of most of the forms you will be using.
- State Administrative Manual (SAM): a reference source for statewide policy, procedures, regulations and information issued by the Governor's Office and the departments of Finance, General Services, and Personnel Administration. SAM section 4500 applies to telecommunications. Except where specifically exempted, CAL FIRE must comply with SAM provisions.
- PSC User's Handbook: a very useful guide developed for telecommunications representatives in various state agencies. If your ECC doesn't already have a copy, contact PSC HQ.
- Agency Telecommunications Representative Bulletins: issued by PSC as a means of transmitting policy, procedures or other information to state agencies. Every TCO should be on the mailing list.
- Equipment vendors: can provide information on their specific products that may meet your needs. Contact several vendors in order to determine the various options available. Before any purchase or commitment to purchase, be absolutely clear that you have the authority to commit funds and are using approved vendors. There may be mandatory and / or CMAS Contracts for specific types of equipment. If uncertain, consult the unit administrative officer

and or the Senior TCO / Telecom Manager in Sacramento HQ. All of CAL FIRE's communications hardware purchasing is done at the Sacramento HQ level and with the advance approval of Cal OES / PSC

- Service providers (telephone): local utilities and long distance carriers can provide information about services that they offer, as well as price information. They also provide information about your existing service. Each TCO needs to cultivate a working relationship with at least one local telephone company service representative. This person will become a valuable asset, especially during major emergencies when extra lines and services are needed within a short time frame. Keep in mind purchasing requirements per Purchasing Handbook (HB 3200).
- Trade shows and exhibitions allow TCO to examine a variety of state-of-the-art telecommunications products and services. Watch newspapers and communications-industry trade publications for show dates.
- Membership in organizations: such as CalNENA, (Calif. Chapter of the National Emergency Number Association) The Association of Public Safety Communications Officers (APCO), and Tele-Communications Association (TCA), among others. Attending meetings and reading publications of these associations is an excellent way of staying current with telecom issues.

[\(see next section\)](#)

[\(see HB Table of Contents\)](#)

[\(see Forms or Forms Samples\)](#)